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COMMITTEE ON THE INTERNATIONAL
YEAR FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
Item 4 of the agenda

PROGRAMME OF MEASURES AND ACTIVITIES TO BE UNDERTAKEN IN CONNEXION WITH THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Observations received from Governments

Memorandum by the Secretary-General

Addendum

NEW ZEALAND

[Original: English]
26 January 1965

The New Zealand Government has given careful consideration both to document ST/SG/AC.5/3 and to the summary records of the first round of discussions in the Committee on the International Year. These documents are a valuable guide to individual countries planning their own participation in the International Year. New Zealand is prepared to support and to undertake practical measures which are designed to achieve improvement in the recognition of human rights, and a wider understanding of their importance.

The New Zealand Government believes that all Governments should be encouraged to participate in programmes concerning the International Year, but that it should be left to the discretion of individual Governments to decide what observances would be most appropriate for them and how they ought to be carried out. Steps which may be appropriate or desirable in one country will undoubtedly not be applicable in another. Moreover, differences of emphasis in the recognition of human rights throughout the world result in different priorities in the various countries. For this reason it would not be advisable to make a choice of subjects

to be given priority during 1968, and it is considered that the list contained in the working paper is not exhaustive enough. No rights should be especially singled out at the expense of others which are equally important.

New Zealand would wish to have more details of the financial implications and objectives of such an international Conference as the one proposed, before making any comments upon its value. Special regional seminars within the framework of the Advisory Services Programme seem at this stage more likely to achieve the desired aims.

New Zealand has long held the view, expressed by the Committee in its paper, that invidious distinctions in the matter of human rights are better dealt with through education and persuasive example than through enforcement by legislation. The New Zealand Government therefore considers that the widest possible distribution of information material on human rights ought to be arranged for the years preceding the International Year. It is further of the view that the programme finally decided by the Committee should concentrate on effective educational measures designed to remove prejudice and discrimination, as well as provide for the examination of existing and the introduction of new legislation.

Furthermore the New Zealand Government is of the opinion that full and careful consideration should continue to be given, as it has been in the past, to important international instruments which may suffer from being hastily drawn up or accepted without due examination.